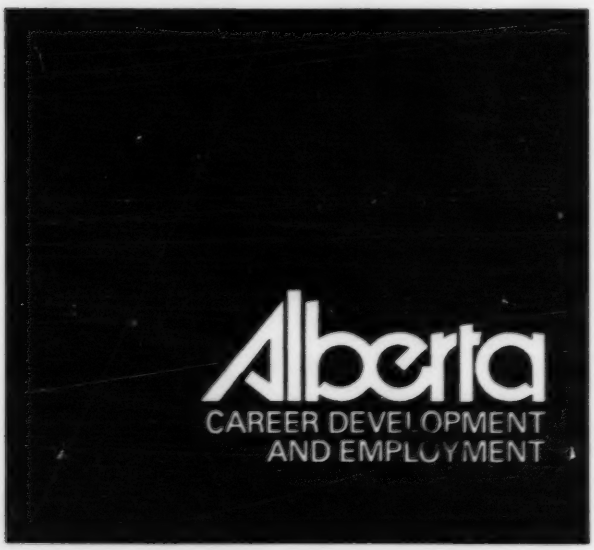
Guide to setting up a

Career Resource Centre



91-06463/

3000/02/91
ISBN# 0-7732-0175-0
© Alberta Career Development and Employment

For additional copies, please contact
Learning Resources Distributing Centre
Alberta Education
12360 – 142St
Edmonton, Alberta
Telephone: 427-2767

Contents

1. Getting Started 3
Making a Start 3
Setting Goals with Deadlines 6

2. Meeting your Human Resource Needs — staffing 7
Assessing Your Particular Staffing Needs 7
Recruiting and Hiring Staff 9
Staff Training and Orientation 11

3. Getting Set Up 12
Location 12
Physical Considerations 12
Furnishings and Equipment 14
Other Decor 15

4. Choosing, Evaluating, and Obtaining Career Resource Materials 16
Choosing Career Resource Materials 16
Evaluating Career Resource Materials 20
Obtaining Career Resource Materials 23
Checking In and Receiving Resource Materials 25

5. Processing Career Resource Materials — classifying, cataloguing and maintaining your collection 26
Looking at Classification Systems 26
Selecting a Classification System 30
Maintaining Your Collection — Keeping Resource Materials Current 30
Developing a Cataloguing System 32
Using the Collection 33

6. Computers in your Resource Centre 34
Considering Computerization 34
Planning for Computerization 36
Introducing Computers — Choosing Programs to Meet Your Needs 38
Future Trends 41

7. Promoting your Career Resource Centre 42
Letting the User Know You Exist 42
Attracting Potential Users 42
Encouraging User Self-Directedness 44

References 46
Appendix 47

1. Getting Started

Without a doubt the age of information and technology has arrived. Never before have people involved in career planning, both practitioners and their clients, had a greater need for relevant, accurate and up-to-date career-related information. And never before has the amount of available information, presented in different formats, been greater. The challenge of the day is to get the needed information to those who need it, in a format that is most useful to them.

Effective Career Resource Centres that use a multimedia approach to the dissemination of information, by making books, magazines, video and audio tapes, computers, etc., available to their clients, can play a major role in assisting many people with their career-related information needs.

Maybe that's why you've decided to set up a Career Resource Centre for a particular client group. But right now you may be caught somewhere between the dreams of what you'd like to be able to do and the reality of what you think you can afford — in terms of space, staff, facilities and finances. That can leave you wondering just where to begin.

Recognize that it's difficult to know what options you have, until you know what's available and possible. There are lots of questions that you'll have to answer, and possibly a fair bit of research you'll have to do before you can even begin to see what's possible and desirable. But starting with an attitude that's open to all possible options will probably get you off on the right foot. That will allow you to be flexible and creative in developing a centre that's custom designed to meet the specific needs of your particular users.

This guide is designed to take you through the process of setting up a Resource Centre from your first realization that you need one, to the time when you're operating a fully functioning one. The suggestions offered in this book are fairly general so they can apply to as many people in as many different circumstances as possible.

Making a Start

The following questions are guidelines which can be used to help you research and investigate those issues you need to consider before you begin to set up a centre. They can also be used as the basis for developing a *needs assessment*.

Many people believe that doing a needs assessment, whether formal or informal, is the best place to start. As the name implies, a needs assessment assesses needs, and can help you decide who needs what, and what

you can do to meet those needs. A formal needs assessment will gather information from numbers of individuals both inside and outside of your organization who represent the user community you intend to serve. An informal needs assessment may draw on the expertise of only those most closely linked with the centre's development. Whether you do a formal needs assessment, an informal needs assessment, or investigation and research on your own, somehow you'll have to gather the support data that will be needed to justify the development of the centre. How you go about collecting that support data will be up to you to decide.

Once you have gone through the process of collecting the information, answer the following questions. By the time you're finished this exercise, you'll be surprised how well developed your vision of the centre will be.

1. What is the purpose, goals and objectives of your centre?

- Why do you feel you need and want this Resource Centre?
- What information needs do you hope to meet through this centre?
- How will this centre contribute to meeting the overall needs of your clients/users?
- How does the centre fit into your overall organization?

2. Who will be the main users of your Resource Centre?

- employed people seeking career change/ or re-entry
- disabled workers looking for employment alternatives
- individuals with special language needs
- practitioners in need of career planning information for workshop development, for teaching or training, or for use with clients (career planning practitioners, school teachers, employment counsellors, school and post-secondary counsellors)
- students (high school or post-secondary)
- unemployed adults
- employers (including entrepreneurs)

3. What services do you expect to provide to the users of your centre?

- access to a wide variety of career-related materials in a variety of formats/ mediums(including self-help and computer-assisted resource materials)
- workshops on career-related issues
- lending services for periodicals, books, audio-visuals
- search and research services

4. What do you foresee the specific information needs of your particular clients to be?

- **education/training information:** (local, provincial, national, international) — apprenticeship, calendars from college/ university/technical/vocational schools, correspondence/distance education directories, continuing education courses
- **employment-related information:** (local, provincial, national, out-of-country), training information, graduate follow-up survey information, labour market information
- **funding/financial information:** bursaries, scholarships, student finance, accessing financial assistance
- **career development theoretical information and research data**
- **labour market information:** statistics relating to demographic, economic, social and technological trends reflecting current local, regional, provincial, and national labour market conditions
- **career counselling information:** decision-making tools, action-planning tools, assessment tools (tests, inventories, self-assessment instruments, computer-assisted guidance materials)

- **occupational information:** profiles, CCDO/NOC (Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations/National Occupational Classification)
- **job-search information:** hidden job market, completing applications, resume-writing, job interview skills and techniques, etc.
- **low literacy materials relating to education and employment**
- **employer and industry literature:** private industry and public sector reports, trade magazines
- **quality of worklife information:** balancing work/family/leisure, worktime alternatives, retirement planning, etc.
- **employment equity information**
- **entrepreneurship**

5. What human resources will you need to be able to offer the services that are required?

- professionally trained library staff
- career planning/development trained staff
- support staff

6. How can you learn about various options (scope of service, physical layout, materials/resources, etc.) you should consider when developing your Career Resource Centre?

Visit a variety of different Career Resource Centres to see how various centres are set up, staffed, equipped and used.

Call one or several of the provincially-operated Career Development Centres, post-secondary institution Career Resource Centres, agencies who provide employment counselling services, or employers who employ a large number and a wide range of employees. You'll likely be surprised at how anxious these Resource Centre staff will be to show you around, share information, provide assistance and answer any questions you might have.

7. What does the literature written on the subject have to say about the process of setting up a Career Resource Centre?

- After you've seen some centres in action, reading about the process will be a much more meaningful endeavour.
- Consult the References section at the back of this book for some suggested readings.

8. What resources do you already have for starting to set up your Resource Centre?

- physical facilities (space, lighting, etc.)
- furnishings
- staff
- materials and systems for lending materials
- budget for acquisitions
- systems of classification and cataloguing (See Chapter 5 — *Processing Career Resource Materials* for information on classifying materials).

9. Where will your funding be coming from?

Whether your funding is coming from independent sources or from your organization's budget, you may have to be prepared to lobby for the funds you feel you need to create the centre as you envision it. Regardless of the sources of funding, it's best to involve key people in the initial needs assessment discussions. Their active participation in this phase of development will probably increase their understanding of the centre's purpose and goals, and will likely secure their on-going support and commitment for funding for future developments.

When writing proposals for funding, you must ensure that the proposal reflects clear statements of need and purpose, and is supported by realistic arguments, objectives and a proposed budget. A sample proposal format, which could be used to help you put together a proposal for funding purposes can be found in the Appendix, page 48.

10. When and how will computers become part of your information dissemination system?

In today's world, we are witnessing explosions in both information generation and technological advancement. Increasingly the explosion in knowledge and information is being managed through sophisticated computer technology. Whether you are comfortable with them now or not matters little, for the presence of computers and computerized systems in your centre, if it is to be a vital and relevant service, is just a matter of time. It's no longer a case of *if*, but rather, a matter of *when*.

So as you research and observe the workings of other centres as you prepare to set up your own, be aware of the role computers are playing in Career Resource Centres. Evaluate the pros and cons of adopting a computerized system or a manual system for cataloguing your collection initially as compared to converting later. This issue, and others, relating to computer use in a Resource Centre, is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6. The information provided there will give you direction, as well as food for thought, when making this decision.

Setting Goals with Deadlines

Achieving goals without deadlines can sometimes be as illusive as finding the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. But using a timeline with deadlines for accomplishing the various tasks involved in setting up a Resource Centre can move you toward your goal with ease and direction. Using such an approach can allow you to see the developmental nature of the task and will help you to take a longer term approach to your planning, budgeting and development of the centre.

After you have gone through this guide and have a better idea of the road ahead of you, use the following chart to outline the tasks involved in setting up a Career Resource Centre. Set approximate timelines for the completion of the tasks and watch your progress as you check off the completed ones. A few sample tasks have been placed in the chart to give you ideas.

Meeting Your Goals and Your Deadlines

Goals/Objectives	Week/Month 1	Week/Month 2	Week/Month 3	Week/Month 4	Week/Month 5	Week/Month 6	Week/Month 7-8	Week/Month 10-11	Week/Month 12+
Evaluate the need for the centre									
Identify goals and objectives									
Network with other centres									
Determine existing resources									
Develop a budget									
Outline services you plan to offer									
Determine staff needs									
Determine location and appropriate set-up									
Review sources to help you decide on a core collection									
Learn about classification systems									
Determine systems appropriate for your collection									
Begin to order core collection									
Investigate computer software for libraries									
Introduce computerization									

2. Meeting your Human Resource Needs — staffing

The key to the successful operation of any Career Resource Centre is the people. The staff are the heart and soul of the centre and are largely responsible for the tone and atmosphere.

But before you begin recruiting and hiring staff for the Centre, think carefully about the purpose, goals and objectives you've stated for your centre, who the main users of the centre will be, and what kind of people can best achieve those goals and provide the services that will meet the users' information needs. You will want to recruit staff who share those same values and aspire to reach those same goals.

Focusing On Values

The following basic values are some you will want to see in the staff you hire if you are committed to information sharing and meaningful service.

- a commitment to lifelong learning, and the value of career planning
- a desire to share information; people who are disseminators of information, not hoarders
- a desire to be helpful, with an overriding attitude of approachability
- a willingness to look at issues from a broad perspective; people who will increase the user's options when looking for answers, rather than narrowing them down or limiting their possibilities.

With these issues in the forefront of your mind, you'll be ready to start looking at the more practical aspects of staffing — assessing your staffing needs, recruiting and hiring.

Assessing Your Particular Staffing Needs

Although some surveys that have examined the expectations and needs of people using Career Resource Centres have suggested that ideally centres should include a coordinator, a library-trained professional and a clerical support person, that is not always possible or desirable. Centres vary in physical size, in the size of their collections and in the size of their user populations. Centres with limited resources and staff will not have that luxury; nor do they need it. Centres often must make do with one staff member who takes on all three roles and responsibilities; does it all, plus more.

However, in this guide we will outline some of the competencies and skill requirements for a coordinator, a library-trained professional and clerical support, so whatever your staff needs consist of, you will have some guidelines for recruiting and hiring.

Determining How Many Staff You Need

Deciding how many staff you will need may not be the easiest task to accomplish before your centre is operational and before you can get a sense of the demand for your services.

Staff size will depend on a number of factors such as:

- the range of activities that will be involved in offering services (checking materials in and out, ordering, cataloguing, doing searches, interlibrary loans, etc.)
- the demand for services (how often these activities will be performed based on the size of the user population)
- the size of the collection, as well as the range and diversity of formats included.

There is no easy formula for determining the ratio of staff required for "x" number of materials, "x" number of users, or type of service offered. All of these factors must be considered but no one direct relationship exists.

You may find that a better gauge for determining numbers of staff is the range of activities required to operate the centre and the breadth of skills that will be needed to provide the services you offer. Maybe you'll find that the range of activities can be handled by one library-trained person with part-time clerical support, or some other combination of personnel. Consulting with other Resource Centres you consider to be comparable to yours in size, scope and focus may help to give you some direction in this matter.

Determining What Skills Are Needed

To help you decide what level of training your staff need, evaluate the skills and competencies that are required to carry out the various duties and responsibilities of the job.

Some of the primary duties required of Resource Centre staff include:

- selecting, acquiring, organizing and disseminating career information (handling requests, selecting and purchasing materials)
- processing materials, including cataloguing
- culling and updating career information in information files
- typing orders, filing, duplicating and circulating materials
- handling telephone requests, sorting and routing periodicals
- assisting users
- searching user requests
- hiring, training and supervising staff,
- budgeting
- planning programs and activities
- promoting services by developing contacts and networking
- evaluating the performance of the centre

If the above list of duties covers the range of activities your centre's staff are likely to be involved in, chances are you'll need one or more library-trained personnel as well as clerical support. How highly trained the staff are you hire, and how many of them you hire will depend not only on the size of the collection and user community, but also on your budget.

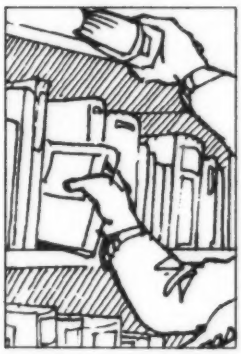
Recruiting and Hiring Staff

Finding People with the Right Skills

Having at least one fully-qualified library-trained staff member, whether that's a library technician or librarian, is a good idea. When making a choice between a trained individual with either a library or a career planning background, a strong library background is preferred. The smooth and effective running of a Career Resource Centre with a collection of over 1000 books depends on that type of expertise.

Some of the more commonly identified skills (technical, functional and self-management skills) desired in coordinators, trained library personnel, and support staff are outlined in the chart at the end of this chapter. You may wish to refer to this chart whenever hiring staff at these or any other levels.

Although certain transferable skills have been indicated as being required competencies for the positions of the coordinator, the library trained personnel, and clerical support, there is certainly an overlap of duties and responsibilities, and therefore, one skill may not necessarily be more appropriate than another. For example the one overall qualification of key importance in this kind of work setting is, of course, "approachability." A staff member may have all the necessary technical skills and competencies listed in the following chart, but may not be utilized by clients if an attitude of indifference to client needs is apparent.



The specific position descriptions of any additional staff will depend on the services offered by the centre. The distribution of duties will be determined by the basic structure of the Career Resource Centre, its programming objectives, staff skills and competencies, and the resources available. The information in your needs survey should help you to draw up a position description(s) of the person(s) needed to staff the centre.

Assessing the Level of Staff You Can Afford

One factor that plays a major role in staffing is the budget you have to work with. Regardless of who you might like, in terms of trained staff, what you can afford is all you can get. Asking yourself the following questions may help you get a realistic view of what you can afford.

- How much funding has been allocated for salaries? How many full-time salaried employees does that allow you, and at what levels?
- Could you manage with some full- and part-time staff, or only part-time? What salaries can you afford to offer?
- Is the salary you can afford to pay sufficient to attract the staff you need?
- What compromises are you willing and able to make, in terms of trained/untrained staff, full/part time staff, contract staff, etc.?

Using Volunteers in Your Centre

Volunteers can, and regularly do, assist with a number of clerical duties including reshelving books, processing materials, providing orientations, answering routine questions from clients that require non-expert information, helping clients operate the computer or audio-visual equipment, and the general maintenance of the centre. Volunteers can offer enthusiastic and competent assistance at little or no cost to the organization and in return gain valuable work experience for themselves.

Staff Training and Orientation

Whoever you hire, all staff must be given proper orientation, thorough training and adequate supervision. Some technical functions and skills may be acquired on the job if qualified personnel is there to train. In other cases, services may be contracted to bring in the expertise to train staff.

Encourage opportunities for career planning for staff members at all times. You're in the business of career planning, and they, too, will want to use the career information they gain while on the job.

With the right staff in place the centre will be up and running as soon as you find a place to operate out of, and have some resources to offer. You will likely want to involve the staff you have hired in designing the physical space.

Valuable Skills for Resource Centre Staff

The Coordinator

Technical Skills

- a good knowledge and understanding of career guidance goals, of career development theories, and the variety of career counselling techniques
- a good knowledge of career development literature
- a working knowledge of program planning (e.g., job search workshops)

Functional Skills

- the ability to manage a centre, career information and human resources
- an understanding of program evaluation
- a knowledge of community/area employment trends and openings, and procedures for accessing and using this information
- the ability to develop and administer budgets
- the ability to provide staff supervision (including recruiting, selecting, training and giving direction)
- the ability to maintain information on occupational choice and job placement
- the ability to quickly identify client needs
- the ability to plan and implement an array of career guidance activities (e.g., career fairs, field trips, student orientations, parent conferences, employer conferences)
- the ability to communicate to potential clients the purpose and capabilities of the Career Resource Centre
- the ability to maintain good public relations with the surrounding community

Self-management Skills

- progressive, decisive, articulate, diplomatic and broad-minded

Library-Trained Personnel

Technical Skills

- a working knowledge of library systems and procedures
- a knowledge of the organization's billing and invoicing procedures
- a general knowledge of employment and further education opportunities in the area served by the agency
- a general knowledge of community resources, local, regional and provincial referral agencies such as vocational rehabilitation, mental retardation, private and public employment agencies
- a good working knowledge about computer programs, what they can do, and how to keep current with all the advances
- an understanding of the goals, organization, and communication channels within the agency
- an understanding of the goals and objectives of the agency's career guidance and career education systems

Functional Skills

- the ability to identify information needs, research and discover current and up to date facts
- the ability to communicate ideas effectively verbally or in written form with clients, staff, and community members
- the ability to identify job placements, educational institutions, and career planning and community resources
- the ability to provide instruction for using self-directed career exploration programs

- the ability to maintain client and centre records
- the ability to administer surveys and analyze data

Self-management Skills
- flexible, adaptable, quick-thinking and patient

Clerical Support

Technical Skills
- an understanding of the organization's career guidance and career education programs

Functional Skills
- organizational and planning skills
- typing skills
- general clerical skills
- oral communication skills
- the ability to speak a client's native language or dialect if this need is appropriate
- a working knowledge of how to use audio-visual aids, materials, computers and other equipment

Self-management Skills
- the ability to deal with the public and work well with others
- the ability to know when to seek the supervisor's help and refer user inquiries to someone else
- organized, accurate and meticulous

3. Getting Set Up

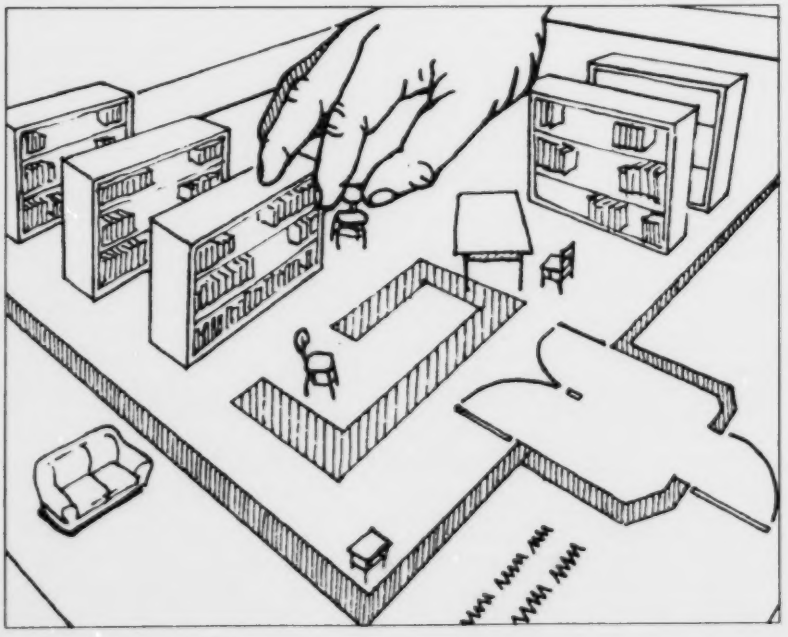
When deciding on the physical set up of a Career Resource Centre, some of the most important factors to consider are location, effective use of available space, lighting, furnishings and equipment, and how to arrange it all.

Location

Location is a critical factor in determining a centre's success. Whether the centre is going to be used by students in a high school, adults within a specific community, or career development professionals from across the province, potential users must

- be aware that the facility exists
- know where to find it, and
- be able to get to it with relative ease.

An excellently stocked Resource Centre tucked away on the 13th floor of an obscure building will likely be far less utilized, particularly by the general public, than a small "storefront" Resource Centre on the street level of a busy downtown location.



When a centre cannot be ideally or even fairly-well located for visibility and easy user accessibility, extra attention must be given to directing potential users to it. Some suggestions for increasing visibility and raising awareness of a centre's location include the following: signs and class orientations (in educational settings), notices on community billboards, ads or feature articles (in regular newsletters sent to career development practitioners or other professionals), or public service announcements on radio stations.

Physical Considerations

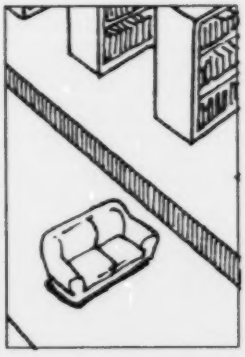
Once the location has been established, making the best use of the space available becomes the major issue. Your needs survey will have identified the kinds of services required by your primary users. Those needs, translated into physical space needs (i.e. research or reading areas, independent learning stations or browsing areas, discussion or workshop/seminar rooms, audio-visual viewing rooms, and storage rooms), will help you determine what you must do with the space you have.

Wherever you are setting up, but especially if you are utilizing space in an old building, you will need to ensure that the floors can handle the weight of the books on the book shelves. Contact the building owner/ manager, and ask if the floors meet the specifications/requirements for "load bearing floors."

Design and Lay-Out

When designing the actual floor plan of your centre, the following principles serve as good guidelines:

- locate the catalogue and circulation desk close together, near the entrance
- locate reading/research areas away from the circulation desk, but adjacent to the periodicals
- locate work areas for classifying and cataloguing (tasks that require intense concentration) away from high traffic areas, preferably in an enclosed area
- locate one staff member's work area close enough to reading/research areas to be easily accessed and to see when clients need help
- locate display materials at eye level for the height of the typical user. Resource materials should be located where most of your clients can reach them. This means that if many of your clients have physical handicaps or are undergoing physical rehabilitation, materials should be located within easy reach for anyone in a wheelchair.
- locate displays as close as possible to a major traffic route — i.e. in the entrance of the centre or around the reading area, not on walls adjacent to shelves.
- ensure that all materials have some degree of access and are not completely hidden away. You want clients to be able to help themselves to what they need, particularly the self-help information.



Shape of the Room

The ability to make effective use of available space also depends on the shape of the room(s). Generally speaking, square spaces are more efficient in terms of lighting and acoustics, as well as being easier to allow for expansion or reduction in size over time. Arranging furniture and equipment may also be easier in a square shaped space.

Lighting

Lighting that is well diffused and scattered evenly is best for spaces that will be used a great deal for reading. Too much light concentrated in any one direction causes shadowing, while light shining directly in ones'eyes can be annoying.

The number and size of windows, as well as the direction they face, will influence the lighting conditions in the centre and may influence the kind of lighting plans you make.

Room size, and wall and furnishings colours also affect lighting requirements. The smaller and darker the room, the more light is needed; while larger, more-open spaces with lighter coloured walls and furnishings are, in general, in need of less lighting.

Acoustics

As in any other office environment, people's voices and background noises can interfere with the quietness of the centre. Providing individual study areas, and listening and viewing centres may ensure that some noise is curbed in areas where it might be distracting.

Furniture can both help and hinder the control of sound as well. Simply facing people away from one another, staggering work stations, and keeping conversational distances within workstations short (between one and two meters) all help. On the other hand, long rows of metal files can reflect significant amounts of sound. Where file cabinets must be placed in long rows, panelling their backs with acoustic materials such as fiberglass wool helps reduce sound reflection.

Computers, photocopiers, typewriters and other sound-producing equipment should be placed on acoustic pads, as far away as possible from reading areas. Carpeting also reduces the sound of foot traffic.

Furnishings and Equipment

Library furnishings and equipment are designed specifically for organizing large volumes of resource materials effectively. When used as designed, they go a long way towards making the difference between chaos and order in a well-stocked Resource Centre.

Regardless of the size of the centre and its collection, its use, and your budget, investing in some basic standard library furnishings (storage units, shelving, filing cabinets, and possibly a check-out desk) is highly recommended. Library furniture and supply catalogues are available from suppliers.

The following list of furniture is suggested as a minimum, if sufficient funds are available.

- material storage and display units
  - single open face shelving (2)
  - sloping periodical shelving (3)
  - back to back open shelving (2)
  - 20 pocket magazine/brochure floor stand (1)
  - vertical filing cabinets (2)
- check-out/reception desk
- card catalogue cabinet (if using a manual system)
- clerical desk with run-off and chair
- study carrel(s) — wheelchair accessible
- work/mobile tables — 30" x 60" (77 cm by 154 cm) (3)
- coffee table
- chairs (12)
- typewriters, stands and chairs (2)
- computer with EDP stand & 2 side arms and chair
- audio cassette player with head phones
- audio tape revolving stand
- VCR (VHS) with monitor and stand and head phones
- clocks (2)[1]

While some of these furnishings/equipment may initially appear to be extravagant "luxury" items, they can provide a tremendous payoff in terms of enhanced user independence and better utilization of resources. Consider for a moment the difference in visual impact between periodicals on regular shelves with successive issues piled one on top of the other and these same periodicals' current issues standing on vertical shelving with the full cover visible. The old adage, "a picture is worth a thousand words," becomes the key when setting up your resource area.

Purchasing library furnishings, while much like purchasing home furnishings in terms of looking for quality in structure and design, requires a few extra considerations:

- price (is it worth the price in view of the special function it will provide?)
- ease of installation, maintenance, rearrangement, and demounting
- number of space-saving arrangements available
- accessibility to plug-in outlets for computers, typewriters and other aids
- acoustical qualities (how much noise does it produce?)
- lighting qualities (e.g. overhead projector)
- aesthetics
- availability (time required to receive order and ship to site)
- manufacturer's commitment (warranties, guarantees, and service)

Physical Arrangement

Determining how to arrange your library furnishings is much like arranging furniture and selecting accents at home, in terms of establishing a comfortable setting, and meeting the functional and aesthetic needs of the occupants. That's when floor plans come in handy.

---

[1] Adapted from the *Report of the Labour Market Information Centre Task Force*, Alberta Career Development and Employment, Field Services, August 1989.

Since we can't always move heavy or awkward furniture or the kitchen cupboards, floor plans for our own living spaces help us visualize and often confirm certain ideas of what would or wouldn't work. Sketch out some possible floor plans for your centre. Shuffling furniture back and forth on paper is a lot easier than across the floor, so plan as much as you can on paper.

As you are developing the physical plan to accommodate the resource materials in your centre, take a look at the set-up in other existing resource areas — in public libraries, local high schools, social service agencies, or Canada Employment Centres. They can provide valuable ideas that you might be able to take back and incorporate into your own centre. But before you do adopt someone else's idea, consider how your client group differs from the group served by the Resource Centre that you are visiting. Discuss the set-up and its individual adaptations for its users, and any other questions or concerns you may have with the person in charge of the Resource Centre.

Remember, how you arrange things the first time may not be where they will stay. Be prepared to move some things around if they don't work, but you'll want to be pretty sure of the permanent location of the shelving units that are much too heavy to relocate. Doing a rough traffic flow study before and *after* placing furnishings and equipment may help you see what will and won't work.

Other Decor

Paying attention to little details such as wall and furniture colours, draperies, pictures (posters) and plants can also add a lot to the atmosphere of your centre.

Keep in mind that you want to create an environment that invites your clients to come in and stay long enough to use what you have. Show that you want to share the wealth of information you have on your shelves — after all, that's why you're there. You'll know that you've accomplished your goal of creating an exciting environment in your centre if the clients feel free to ask questions and explore the collection, and come back again and again.

But before you can set out the welcome mat, the next important job is organizing the career resource materials. It can appear to be an overwhelming task at first unless you proceed one step at a time. The following chapters may help to simplify the process.

4. Choosing, Evaluating and Obtaining Career Resource Materials

In the next two chapters we will discuss some of the most important tasks you will perform when setting up a Career Resource Centre. Those tasks relate to **selecting, evaluating, obtaining and organizing** all the materials for your centre. Their suitability, availability and accessibility will be the ultimate test of the value your centre will have for the clients for whom it was established.

After you have identified many of the basic philosophical and practical considerations pertaining to the development of your centre — goals, objectives, staff and space — you will then be ready to start doing those things that will prepare you for providing services for your users — establishing a resource collection.

So, with a staff in place, and a space to operate out of, your focus will now turn to selecting the materials that will allow you to meet your goals.

Choosing Career Resource Materials

The following suggestions are designed to help you become aware of, evaluate, and decide on appropriate resources for your centre. Use these suggestions to help you make your selection.

1. Let Your User's Needs Guide You in Choosing Resource Materials

The user, and his/her particular career planning and development needs, must be at the forefront of every decision and consideration you make relating to both the selection and organization of materials. In addition, both the broad and specific goals defined as your purpose also must be reflected in your selection.

Your particular collection, although reflecting the unique needs of the potential users, will likely include core information in the following content areas:

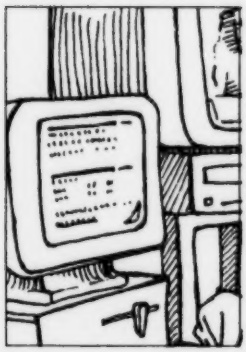
- occupational information
- educational/training information
- financial and funding assistance for educational/training/retraining purposes
- labour market information
- job-search information
- assessment information and tools (including self-assessment)
- self-development information (including assertiveness, study skills, decision-making)
- career planning/development information

Depending on the focus of your Resource Centre, and what will be most useful to your users, some of the standard core-collection categories listed above may be extensive, while others may be minimal.

A specialized Resource Centre, for example, designed to assist rehabilitating adults to make alternative career choices may have a large selection of resources dealing with educational/training and retraining programs and financial assistance, as well as materials on adjustment to change and maintaining self-esteem and confidence. Other categories may be less well developed.

2. Be Aware of the Need for a Multi-Media Approach in Your Selection

Career resource materials should include more than just print materials. In increasing numbers these days, career-related materials are available in a wide variety of formats including video, audio, interactive video disc and other computer-assisted materials. Because people have different learning styles, different levels of reading ability, and different levels of comfort with different media formats, it's important for you to provide career information in a variety of different mediums.



3. Set Up Your Own Information-Gathering Network to Help you Identify and Select Appropriate Resources

Seek out knowledgeable people in the community who are familiar with:

- information services,
- career planning information and/or
- your particular clients and their needs.

Each will likely be able to give you information that will allow you to get a head start in identifying the kinds of resources you'll need for your particular group.

4. Become Familiar with the Resources Available in Other Information Centres

This will help you determine what constitutes a basic collection, as well as identify some of the expensive resources you may not be able to purchase, but that you can refer your clients to use in other locations. Visit a number of established Career Resource Centres. Discuss budgets, basic sources for selecting materials, the extent of their collection, a multi-media approach to building a collection, staffing, lending procedures, and the breadth of services you hope to be able to provide. All these factors will have a major impact on the selections you make and the collection you build.

Many of the major directories and reference books you'll find in established Resource Centres are annuals, and often are expensive. You may be able to make arrangements with some of these centres to pass on old copies to you. Much of the information contained in these directories will not be too outdated for you to use, but make sure you clearly indicate that the information is not the current edition. Books such as *Books In Print, The Corpus Almanac and Canadian Source Book,* and *The Canadian Almanac* are these types of source books.

5. Keep in Mind your Budget and Physical Space

The amount of money you have for developing a collection will undoubtedly have a major impact on the type and quantity of materials you can select. You'll have to try to find resources that will give you the most and best mileage for your money.

Get advice and direction from the network of contacts you've established in other Resource Centres. But don't shy away from considering resources you'd like to have but assume would be too expensive. Check out the prices before you decide you can't afford it. You may just be pleasantly surprised. Items like computer hardware and software programs are continually coming down in price as new technology develops.

The amount of physical space you have will also be a major determining factor in the choice of materials you make. As discussed in the previous chapter, you need to be

aware of the amount of space required to accommodate various kinds of resources you might like to order — a listening and/or viewing centre for audio tapes and videos, a work space for computer-assisted career planning materials, reading and browsing areas for periodicals, shelf space for books, in addition to storage and display space.

6. Identify Sources that Can Lead You To New and Existing Career-Related Resource Materials

There are numerous sources you can consult that can help you to become aware of good career resource materials. Once you're aware of them, you can follow up on and evaluate them for your own collection. Some of those sources include:

- **professional journals** — often list, review and/or advertise current print and audio/visual materials related to the field. They also carry relevant articles which may include valuable references and bibliographies. Journals such as *The Worklife Report, Training and Development Journal, Journal of Employment Counselling, Journal of Career Planning and Employment* regularly carry reviews of new related materials.
- **government departments and agencies** — are good sources of career-related information. Canada Employment and Immigration, as well as provincial government departments concerned with employment (Alberta Career Development and Employment), labour, consumer affairs, statistics, and education/advanced education can often provide a variety of valuable materials, which are often free. The common source books and almanacs (mentioned earlier) will give you names and addresses of these various government departments.
- **professional associations** — (you can find them in the yellow pages under associations) — usually produce newsletters, pamphlets and often surveys that might be of interest from an occupational and labour market perspective.
- **popular periodicals** — often carry general interest, occupational/work related articles on such topics as job-hunting techniques; women and work; managing home, family and work; labour market conditions and projections; dual-career families, etc. Appropriate articles can be copied and filed in vertical subject files, as supplements to the collection.
- **bibliographies** — provide a comprehensive listing of related materials which can then be evaluated individually.
- **yellow pages** — provide a geographical and subject listing of employers who you can contact for information.

Ask some of your contacts at other Career Resource Centres for the names of specific journals, periodicals, associations and agencies that are particularly good sources of career-related materials.

7. Focus On Building A Core Collection First

To help you get a clearer idea of some of the specific materials you'll need to consider choosing, the broad content categories listed earlier are outlined below in greater detail. They will help you identify specific types of information for your core collection.

Occupational Information

- Monographs and profiles that provide descriptions of different occupations
- Booklets and information sheets from industries, associations, organizations, and governments
- Audio-visual materials produced by large employers or industries

- Occupational reference/classification books — *Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations, National Occupational Classification, Encyclopaedia of Occupations, Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, etc.

Education/Training Information (provincial, national, international)

- Apprenticeship and trade certification programs
- Calendars — college, university, technical/vocational institutions
- Continuing education courses — local
- Correspondence/distance education
- Directories of post-secondary institutions (national and international) — universities, colleges, technical and vocational centres

Financial Assistance Information

- Bursaries, Scholarships from post-secondary institutions
- Student Finance Board
- Government-sponsored training and retraining programs

Job Search Information

Tip Sheets, books or pamphlets on:

- Completing Application forms
- Getting, Preparing for and Handling Job Interviews
- Resume-Writing
- Tapping the Hidden Job Market
- Networking
- Information Interviewing

Employer Literature

- Private industry and public sector reports, promotional material, etc
- Corporate annual reports
- Industry directories
- Association directories

Labour Market Trends Information — Available from:

- Federal sources — Canada Employment and Immigration, Statistics Canada, Conference Board of Canada, Secretary of State, Labour Canada, Canadian Mental Health, etc.
- Provincial sources — Alberta Career Development and Employment, Bureau of Statistics (Alberta Treasury)
- Local sources — Associations, Boards, Research Institutes

Career Counselling Information

- Tests, inventories, workbooks for self-assessment
- Decision-making tools
- Action-planning tools

Computer-Assisted Career Planning Materials

- Programs such as CHOICES, Career Builder, Micro-Skills, Future Focus

8. Establish a List of Criteria to Help you Evaluate Materials Being Considered for Selection

The following selection criteria should be considered when evaluating any and all types of resource materials.

- suitability for your user
- ability to meet client/user needs
- readability and appropriate level
- currency
- accuracy
- source of authority
- necessity for balancing out your collection
- format (print, audio, audio-visual, computer-assisted)
- cost

The more specific considerations that must be taken into account when evaluating particular types of career resources materials, are discussed in the following section.

Evaluating Career Resource Materials

Before you start ordering career-related materials of various types, there are a number of issues that you should be aware of that can help you evaluate the material in question.

1. Occupational Material

It's important for you to be aware that some occupational information is produced for public relations/marketing purposes by the employer/industry and, as a result, may not describe occupations objectively. The following questions may help you evaluate occupational materials to see if they are appropriate.

- Is it Canadian? (American information is acceptable but Canadian information is preferable, if available.)
- Does it clearly and accurately spell out the duties of the job, as well as the skill requirements, physical abilities and personality traits which are important to the occupation?
- Does it describe in detail the training and experience required, and where that can be obtained?
- Is it dated? Information that is more than three years old, unless extremely general in nature, is probably not particularly useful anymore.
- Does it describe work at various levels in the occupation — entry-level as well as at the top?
- Does it present an honest assessment of salaries, future employment and advancement possibilities?
- Does it retain an objective viewpoint, allowing the reader to make an independent judgement about the occupation's desirability? Or has it been written for promotional or entertainment purposes?

2. Non-Occupational Materials (including information relating to education/training, financial assistance, labour market trends, career planning, decision-making, job search, etc.)

Answering the following questions should help you evaluate whether or not the bound publications you may be considering for your Resource Centre are indeed appropriate choices.

- What have reviewers had to say about this book? Reviews may be found in various professional journals, periodicals and newsletters published for career development professionals.
- Does the content address your users' needs?
- Would the resource be easily understood by your users? Is the reading level and/or approach, style/presentation appropriate?
- Do other Career Resource Centres or career planning professionals have this publication? What is their opinion of it?
- Do you think the value of the publication justifies the cost?
- Would the inclusion of this resource help balance out the collection?

3. Audio/Visual Materials

i) Is Previewing Audio/Visual Materials Essential?

Since many audio/visual materials are expensive, it is important to be able to preview materials to be sure of their suitability and usefulness. But you'll also have to decide whether or not the cost and time lag involved in previewing is worth it. Usually the total cost of the item will help you to decide. For example, if the cost of previewing a $200.00 video is $40.00 plus mailing and handling, would it be cost effective to preview before purchasing and end up spending $240.00 or more for the item?

But there are ways of previewing and reducing the cost factor. That's where using your network of professional contacts can be invaluable — either as a source of free previews (if another centre/agency already has the resource in question) or at reduced costs (if several centres/agencies want to preview together and share the costs). Screening materials with your colleagues has the added benefit of bringing about a more thorough evaluation.

The larger audio/visual marketing companies regularly set up preview days across the country for which they charge a fee to draw in potential buyers to see their latest products. Make sure that you are on their mailing lists for such events. Since these events can be rather costly to attend, you may want to seriously question whether or not the money you'd spend attending, would be money well spent.

Certain companies (such as the National Film Board and ACCESS TV — Alberta only) have previewing facilities in major cities that can be booked by potential buyers or educational institutions wishing to rent their products.

ii) How Does this Particular Audio/Visual Rate in Terms of Content and Design?

Because audio/visual materials usually require a larger investment of money than print items, clear guidelines for evaluating them are crucial. The following guidelines can help you evaluate content, instructional design, bias, and quality of information.

- Purpose — Is the purpose obvious to the viewer early on in the presentation?
- Title — Does the title accurately reflect the content and/or purpose of the film?
- Objectives/content/audience coherence — Does the message effectively and obviously fulfill the stated objectives (as outlined in the user's guide)? A product that addresses a limited number of objectives adequately is usually more desirable than one that overwhelms the audience with massive amounts of content and multiple objectives.
- Accuracy and appropriateness of concepts and information — Are concepts presented in a manner appropriate to the comprehension level of the intended audience? Are terms relating to the concepts defined in the user's guide? Is all information accurate, comprehensive, and current?
- Social orientation — Is the product free of bias and stereotyping — sexual, age, racial, or religious? Is there a reasonable representation of individuals of various ages, minority groups, and handicapped individuals, and are both sexes equitably portrayed at all employment levels?
- Realistic portrayal of the issue — Does the presentation show the situation in a realistic way; presenting difficulties as well as solutions?
- Motivating effect on audience — Does the product encourage viewers to become involved in active discussion and/or follow-up activities rather than passive viewing?

The following criteria relate to technical aspects of audio/visual materials that you should evaluate carefully before purchasing.

- Picture and Sound quality
- Length — Does the length allow the issue to be dealt with adequately, and still stay within the attention and interest span of the intended audience?
- Packaging — Does the packaging protect the item and facilitate easy identification and use?
- User's guide — Is there a companion guide to help you select and use the product? Does it have a synopsis with a description of the content and suggested teaching strategies? Does it include ideas for possible discussion, activities, and additional resources?

Hopefully these suggestions will help you evaluate the materials, and select those most useful to your users.

4. Computer-Assisted Career Planning Materials

At some point computer-assisted career development/planning tools will likely become part of your career resource collection. Computer programs can, among other things, teach clients about the career planning process, help them select post-secondary institutions and programs of study, write their resumes, search for job openings, and allow them to participate in simulated job interviews.

The following list of considerations is suggested to assist you in evaluating various computer-assisted career-related programs.

Scope

- Does the scope and breadth of the program relate closely to the needs of your users? Does it offer information about options? Apply strategies for decision-making? Give help in planning?
- What population of clients is it intended for?
- What setting(s) is it intended for?

Content

- Is the information suited to the user population? Are the sources of information reliable? Is the information up-to-date? Is the information interpreted validly? Is there a manual or other description of procedures? What career-related issues does it address?

Structure

- Does it offer direct access to information? Does it provide cross-references between related topics of information, or to other resources?

Style

- How interactive is it? How clear is it's message? Are the client's choices clear? Can the client follow the process being used?
- Is the hardware easy to use? Is the software user friendly?
- Are hard copies of client profiles available for them to keep?

Cost

- How expensive is the system? What are the separate costs of hardware, software, licences, and operation?

Potential Usefulness

- Do other counsellors use the program? What is their evaluation of the usefulness of the program?
- What rationale and model is the system based on?
- What is the theoretical basis underlying the system?

Use

- Will your staff have the background/ training, and the time required to assist your users to make maximum use of this tool. In other words, is it relatively a stand-alone program or does its success with the user depend heavily on the presence of a trained counsellor for orientation, guidance, and interpretation and debriefing?

Obtaining Career Resource Materials

1. Getting Freebies or Near-Freebies

i) Where Can You Get Such Information?

The amount of free or inexpensive printed occupational information available seems to be diminishing steadily. But there still is a substantial amount of information produced and distributed by private industries, professional associations, and government departments that is available free of charge or nearly free.

ii) What Kind of Information Is It?

Much of it will likely be in the form of brochures and pamphlets. They, however, can contain a lot of valuable information, particularly occupational.

iii) How Can You Obtain It?

Create a simple, standard form letter or a postcard that can be sent off, with the least amount of difficulty, to a wide variety of producers of free information. Include spaces on the card or letter for your own and the distributor's address along with the title and/or subject area in which you are interested and the number of copies of the material you require. Also include a standard statement asking to be placed on the distributor's mailing list for material relating to specific subjects. You may wish to use this same method for contacting publishers about receiving promotional information about relevant material.

iv) Where Can You Get the Names of Contacts?

One way to start developing a list of contacts for this type of occupational collection is to use any number of American or Canadian bibliographic indexes which compile all known sources of occupational materials.

Another method is to create your own bibliographic index. Start by using the yellow pages and/or business and association directories to identify and contact likely producers of occupational materials. From those who respond with occupational literature, you'll be able to develop a list of producers along with their addresses and names of publications they produce.

To be useful, however, such an index needs to be kept current. Although maintaining this index from year-to-year can be a time-consuming task, the returns in the long run can be profitable.

The following list directs you to some reliable sources through which you can obtain free or inexpensive career planning and occupational information:

- Alberta Career Development and Employment (occupational profiles and other career-related materials including booklets, workshop manuals, directories, audio/visuals and posters)
- Supply and Services Canada, Ottawa
- Guidance Centre — OISE Press, Toronto (Occupational monographs)
- Post-secondary Institutions (in and out-of-province) *Note: Calendars are not free, but essential*
- Trade and Business Associations (found in telephone books or business directories)
- Local Government Offices
- Individual Employers
- Union Halls
- Chambers of Commerce
- Newspapers
- Magazines such as:
  - *Business Week — Careers*
  - *Journal of Career Planning and Employment*
  - *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*
  - *T G Magazine (Teen Generation)*
  - *Worklife*

2. Getting Priced Items — Ordering Print and Audio/Visual Materials

Reference has already been made to the different ways of locating potential resources materials you may wish to evaluate and/or purchase for your collection.

Once you've decided on what you need, your next step is to order it. Although it may sound straightforward, there are a number of considerations and decisions you'll have to make before you go ahead with the ordering.

i) Who Do You Order From?

Sounds simple enough! But from who? Direct from the publisher? The wholesaler? The community bookstore?

And why choose one over another? Are there advantages to ordering from one source or another?

Your primary consideration will likely be whatever is most efficient and economical — whatever will save you and your staff money, time, effort, and hassle. But the choice is yours.

If you decide to order from publishers or wholesalers, the names and addresses of Canadian publishers and wholesalers can be found in the following source directories:

- *Canadian Publishers Directory*, Quill and Quire Magazine, 56 The Esplanade, Suite 213, Toronto, Ontario, M5E 1A7
- *The Book Trade in Canada: With Who's Where*, Ampersand Communications Services Inc., R.R.1, Caledon, Ontario, L0N 1C0

If you decide to order from local retail bookstores, use your network of Resource Centre personnel to help you identify reliable local bookstores you can place your orders with.

ii) Publishers/Wholesalers vs Retail Bookstores — Pros and Cons of Ordering Through Each

Weighing the pros and cons of ordering from publishers, wholesalers or retail bookstores may help you decide on which route to choose. The advantages of ordering directly from the publisher or wholesaler will relate primarily to cost savings — not having to pay a middleman.

But there are advantages to ordering through the local bookstore, too. For one thing, you probably won't need to spend a lot of time tracking down all the ordering particulars required for each item — author and title may be enough for the store. For another, the store will assume responsibility for following up on orders, dealing with delays, and taking care of customs clearance and the prepayment that is often required for items. You'll have to decide whether the mark up you pay on bookstore items is worth the trade-off in terms of staff time and effort saved.

Whichever route you choose for ordering, will still necessitate your having to keep records of what has been ordered, from who, and when. This information can be put into a ledger book or on file cards. It's best to record the title, author, series, date of publication, edition, price, I.S.B.N. number, publisher/distributor, order date and number of copies ordered.

Checking In and Receiving Resource Materials

When the materials you've ordered begin to arrive, the excitement you've been feeling about your centre and the services you'll soon be offering, will begin to mount.

You'll likely begin to realize how close you are to getting the centre off the ground.

But that excitement, by necessity, will be quickly transformed into a flurry of activities involved with checking and receiving the materials, and in processing them for use in the centre.

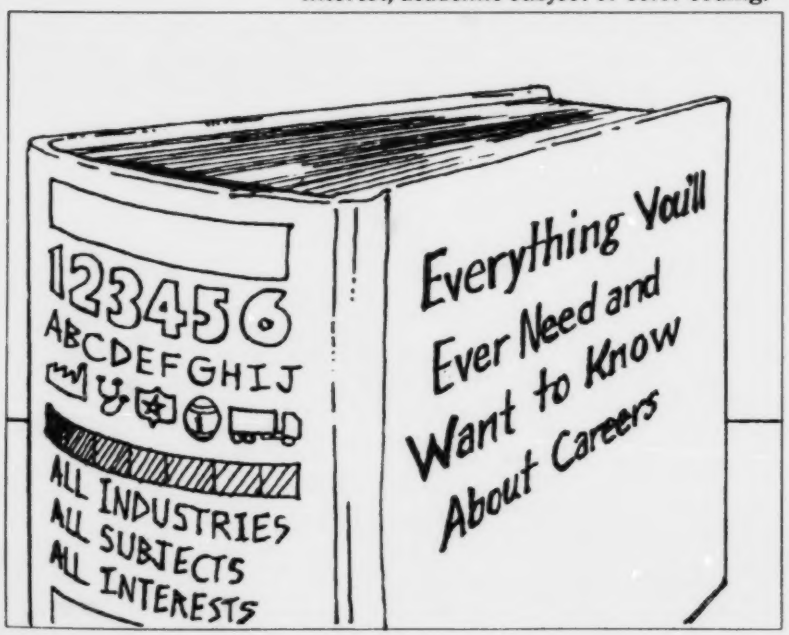
When packing slips and invoices are in and checked against your order cards, the materials will be on their way to be processed before shelving. It's almost time to cut the ribbon.

5. Processing Career Resource Materials —classifying, cataloguing and maintaining your collection

Although this may be the first time you'll need to use the classification system you've decided on, this will not be the first time you'll have thought seriously about it. As indicated in chapter 1, it's a consideration you should make in the early stages of planning for your centre. Long before now, the method you intend to use to organize and store the materials you collect will have been contemplated; now, however, you'll be making your final decisions regarding the classification and cataloguing systems you will be using.

Looking at Classification Systems

There are numerous ways of organizing career resources: numerical designations, alphabetical designations, alphabetical/numerical combination designations, industry-related designations, areas of interest, academic subject or color coding.



Combining the best features of these systems is common practice in Career Resource Centre classification.

For the most part, the amount of materials that need to be classified and the range of subject matter they deal with will determine which classification system is most appropriate. For example, general career planning/development information lends itself best to alphabetical, numerical or alphabetical/numerical combination systems. On the other hand, occupational material lends itself to classifications based on industry, areas of interest, or related academic subject.

Some of the most common classification systems used in Career Resource Centres are described below.

1. Numerical Systems

As mentioned above, numerical systems are well suited to classifying the broad range of career planning and development materials, including job search, education and training programs, labour market trends, financial aid, etc., that can be found in most Career Resource Centres. This system can be used for classifying print materials and/or audio/visuals. Bound publications can be housed on shelves, while audio/visuals should be stored in areas accessible to staff only. A good cataloguing system, however, will likely be needed to enable users to locate all materials relating to a chosen topic.

The following guidelines outline the basic characteristics of a good numerical system. Check these features against the system you are considering.

- Numerical notations should be unique for each item classified.

- Notations should be easy to remember.
- The system should create logical subject groupings on the shelves, allowing users to browse through an interest area without having to consult the catalogue.
- The system must allow for relatively easy expansion of the collection.

Often bound publications, dealing with non-occupational type information such as career planning, job search, changing demographics, etc., are classified according to the same numerical system that public libraries use — the Library of Congress System or the Dewey Decimal System. Such complex numerical coding systems require staff with library training to set them up and maintain them. These systems, however, allow materials to be organized into groups or sub-groups and further subdivided to any degree desired.

Some of the other common numerical classification systems used in Career Resource Centres to classify occupational-type materials include:

i) The CCDO — Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations, soon to be replaced by The NOCS — The National Occupational Classification System

The most widely used occupational classification system in Canada is the Canadian Classification and Dictionary of Occupations (CCDO), originally developed by the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission. The CCDO is a numerical system which provides a nation-wide link for many published occupational information materials. However, it is dated and will be replaced in 1992 by a new classification system currently being developed by Canada Employment and Immigration called the National Occupational Classification (NOC).

Unlike the CCDO, which is a classification system based on job titles, job descriptions and job duties, the NOC will be a system primarily based on skills. Approximately 500 occupational groups will replace the 7000 descriptions in the CCDO. The NOC will classify occupations into groups on the basis of the similarity of the skill-level (amount and type of education and training) and the skill-type (type of work performed) involved, interoccupational mobility, and where applicable, typical patterns of upward progression.

It will consist of:

- 25 Major Groups identified by 2-digit numerical codes
  e.g. #51 — Sales and Service Occupations — Skill Level III
- 132 Minor Groups identified by 3-digit numerical codes
  e.g. #514 — Skilled Occupations in Food Preparation
- 523 Unit Groups (occupational categories) identified by 5-digit numerical codes
  e.g. # 514-04 — Bakers

The Unit Group descriptions will each contain general statements concerning the main activities of the occupations within the group, a list of example titles of occupations in the group, a list of main duties, and general information on entrance requirements and occupational mobility.[2]

In view of the fact that the CCDO will soon be replaced, you may want to consider adopting, temporarily or permanently, either one or a combination of the other methods of organizing occupational information listed here — numerical, colour coded, alphabetical designations, industry-related designations, etc. — as an alternative to adopting the CCDO now and having to convert to another system later.

---

[2] Employment and Immigration Canada, *National Occupational Classification, First draft for discussion purposes*. March 1990.

Final copies of the NOC should be available from Canada Employment and Immigration in early 1992. An index to assist people to convert from the CCDO to the NOC should also be available at that time. Canada Employment and Immigration will be implementing the NOC in their centres in the spring of 1992. Further information on this new classification system can be obtained by contacting Occupational and Career Information, Employment and Immigration Canada in Ottawa (140 Promenade du Portage, Phase IV, 5th Floor, Ottawa/Hull, K1A 0J9, tel. (819) 953-7461).

The drawbacks to using a numerical classification system such as the CCDO or NOC in a primarily self-service Career Resource Centre are:

- The NOC and CCDO are both complex and the CCDO in particular is too comprehensive for certain user groups.
- These systems, like the Library of Congress and the Dewey Decimal system, are also designed for use by professional staff and require that such a person be available to assist clients.
- The CCDO is dated and does not include newer occupations. This means that those classifying the information must make "best guess" judgements about where these occupations fit.

ii) The Concordia University Classification System

This numerical system was developed for and is used in Concordia University's Guidance Information Centre. One of it's most valuable features is it's facility for classifying all types of occupational and other career-related material. Details of the system are outlined in the *Blueprint for a Guidance Information Centre: Classification System*. See the References list at the back of this book.

iii) Your Own Numerical System

You don't have to adopt any of the systems commonly used in other centres if you're comfortable with devising a system of your own that is logical, easy to use and expandable. A simple system, like the example below, that gives all publications in a certain subject area a numerical designation within a specific range of numbers can work quite effectively.

For example:
10.0 – 10.9 — all publications on resume writing
20.0 – 20.9 — all publications on job interviewing, etc.

2. Alphabetical or Alphabetical/Numerical Combination Systems

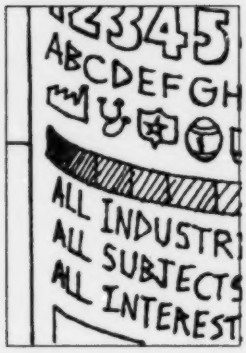
Many of the other systems, whether arranged by industry, subject, interest area or colour coding, will further classify the materials by alphabets, numerics, or a combination of both. For example, when educational materials are brought together because of their common subject matter, they will likely be further classified and shelved alphabetically or numerically according to some devised system.

3. Classification by Industry — Standard Industrial Classification System

Occupational information can be classified by industry. This kind of system is particularly useful if users want to compare similar occupations in different industries, or if there is a major local or regional industrial operation in which they are interested. In this case, a cross-reference system or index is essential to accommodate occupations that are found in more than one industry, and to lead the user to related resources not easily classified into such a system.

4. Classification by General Interest Areas

A classification system can also be tied to areas of interest, with the interest areas being used as major group headings — job search techniques, the hidden job market, labour market trends, work-time innovations, technology and employment, etc. Occupational information can also be categorized under such major interest headings as working with animals, working overseas, working in the travel industry, with appropriate sub-headings of occupations being designated by the use of coloured folder tabs. In this case, an alphabetical listing of occupations would be helpful, as well as a cross-referencing index for occupations that appear in more than one interest area.



5. Classification by Academic Subject

Another common system of organizing career-related materials, particularly in school Resource Centres, is one based on the academic subject to which the material most closely relates. School subjects and occupations can each be filed in alphabetical order with a cross-reference index linking subjects to occupations. This same index could be used to access occupations from a number of school subject areas.

6. Colour-Coded Classification Systems

Small centres that do not expect major expansion in the future do not need complicated numerical classification systems. They may be adequately served by a simple colour coded system whereby all materials in a specific subject area are grouped together and identified by the same coloured dots.

For example:

red — all publications on resume writing
green — all publications on job interviewing
blue — all publications on application forms
orange — all publications on student financial assistance
yellow — all post-secondary calendars, etc.

In most systems extensive cross-referencing is a major help to users in locating related information.

Selecting a Classification System

When you finally select the specific classification system you'll use, from the systems discussed or any others, make sure that the following factors are considered in the decision you make.

- Who the users of the collection will be.
- How large the collection will be, and how broad a range of subject areas it will include.
- Who will be staffing your centre and how much time will they have for classifying, processing, and filing.
- How likely the collection is to expand.

Because individual centres will have unique responses to these questions, it's impossible to recommend one system for all centres. Centres with an extensive collection covering a wide range of materials, a broad user group, and qualified staff, will likely adopt a completely different classification system than a centre with no trained staff, and a relatively small collection that will serve a specialized group of users.

The above-mentioned factors, which will influence the classification system you choose, have encouraged many Resource Centre staff to create custom-designed systems, or to make major adaptations to existing systems. Sometimes, however, it may be possible to tap right into an existing system that seems just right for your collection. For example, if a school librarian you know has already developed an educational and occupational information section in the library that, with minor modifications, could meet your needs, go ahead and adopt the system.

But there's no need to agonize over which system to choose. Any system that meets the three major guidelines listed below, whether selected or devised, adapted, or a combination, will likely serve you well. Just make sure that the system you decide on is

- logical
- easy for users to use, and
- flexible (particularly in allowing you to expand, to convert to a computerized or other system, and/or to access other resources and systems).

Maintaining Your Collection — Keeping Resource Materials Current

Information, in general, is useful only if it is current. Keeping bound publications up to date often involves the expense of constantly making new acquisitions and purchases, while culling outdated materials. But there are additional ways of supplementing your collection and ensuring that it is current.

Developing Vertical Files

The information dealt with in bound publications can be supplemented with current articles kept in vertical files. Constant changes in economic and social conditions, and technological developments which affect employment and working conditions, has created a need for information to be gathered regularly from daily and weekly newspapers, monthly periodicals and quarterly labour market reviews and projections and other statistical reports. Creating bibliographies of this current information as it relates to particular subject areas, can eliminate the need for photocopying and reproducing it for the files. If, however, you need to, or decide to, photocopy articles from these sources, be aware of the copyright law as it applies to reproducing materials and the implications this practice might have.

A vertical filing system, classified according to common subjects, can be established for a broad range of information. The subject headings you choose for these sections will depend on the users' information needs. It's important to use commonly understood and accepted subject headings so users will not have to guess at the files' contents. A cross-referencing system is very useful to ensure that all relevant subject areas are explored in the search for specific materials.

Occupational information, which tends to date most rapidly, can be kept up to date in occupational files, filed by the CCDO or NOC numerical system. For such information in your centre to remain useful, it is necessary for you to cull the outdated material from the files regularly, and replace it with current information. This activity must become a regular routine task.

Here are some tips that might help you keep your information up-to-date.

- Order and evaluate free occupational brochures you see advertised in professional journals. That will ensure they are current and, hopefully, futuristic.
- Before purchasing occupational information advertised in professional journals, weigh the costs involved against how long you expect the information being advertised will remain useful and current.
- Subscribe to a variety of relevant periodicals and get on the organizations' mailing lists. These are excellent ways to obtain current information on job search techniques, market trends, educational opportunities, and other employment-related issues.
- Review relevant newspaper and magazine articles regularly, or record reference information from books and/or magazines either by placing the information in a bibliography or making a photocopy for your files. Be aware, however, of the possibility of violating copyright law through your practice of photocopying for files. As the copyright law is currently changing, ensure that you are informed about acceptable procedures. Indicate the source and date, code it, and place it in the appropriate file folder. Non-bound information is probably best organized according to subjects and filed in filing cabinets or in labelled boxes on the shelf.
- Check the publication dates of the existing materials. When receiving a new edition of existing materials, discard the old.
- Every time you remove a file for client use, check the contents for outdated materials. Information on salary levels and educational requirements often change from year to year.
- Whenever you have the chance, check the key contents of your materials (i.e., future outlook, salary, qualifications) with professionals currently working in the field.
- Assign one staff person the responsibility of maintaining the occupational files. An inventory of each file's contents — including the name of the pamphlet, producer's name and address, and date of publication — should be developed. If materials are lost, they should be replaced immediately.

Developing a Cataloguing System

A good cataloguing system is one of the most essential parts of organizing any information centre, as it is basically the users' guide to the collection. Almost any classification system can work if it is linked to a good catalogue. Yet, no classification system should rely on the cataloging system to enable users to access the collection.

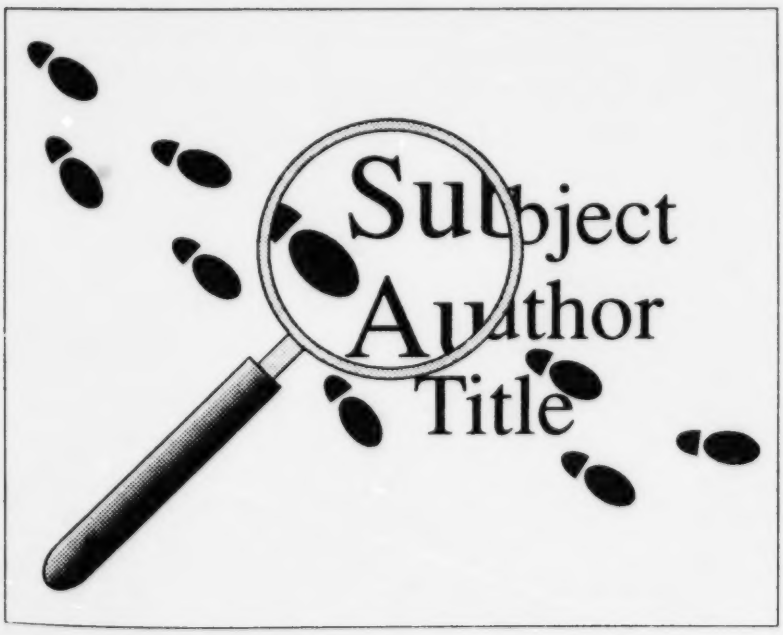
The basis of any cataloguing system is its subject index — the list of topic headings that describe the collection and allow the user to locate publications within narrow subject categories. If you can produce a good subject/author/title catalogue, your users should have no problems locating the materials they need and want, even if they don't have titles or authors. Subject headings should be fairly specific to the user's needs, and made up of terms and phrases common to the user.

One of the major challenges in cataloguing has to do with determining the subject areas in which each individual item best fits. As many resources touch on more than one subject, deciding on the one very best fit can sometimes be difficult. This is where the expertise of trained library personnel is required. They are able to understand the classification system, apply it to the materials and then develop a catalogue.

Qualified library staff spend a great deal of time cataloguing materials. If your centre has no library-trained staff, and that job will have to be done by you, make a point of discussing your concerns about cataloguing with qualified library personnel in other centres. They will likely be able to give you a lot of practical advice on setting up and maintaining a cataloguing system that will work for you.

A catalogue is considered indispensable because it is designed to help users locate information they might otherwise miss. Although a good rule of thumb in organizing career resources is to try to link all related materials together, regardless of format, a good cataloguing system will ensure that your users can make maximum use of all such resources.

Typing the cards for a manual system, or entering the data into an automated computer system, is a clerical function and can easily be taught on the job. A catalogue can take any number of physical forms, depending on the size of the collection and type of user. Some of the more common cataloguing systems are listed below.



- card index in file drawers (e.g., in some public libraries)
- computerized cataloguing system where users can access the computer for search purposes
- computer printouts arranged by author, title, and/or subject
- boxes with subject headings displayed on a shelf (e.g., very small Resource Centre)
- rolodex card file (e.g., small high school Resource Centre)
- listing of subject headings taped to the outside of the respective file cabinet drawers

Regardless of which system is used, subject headings should be specific to the users' needs and be clearly marked so users can easily identify them. Carefully designed, informative and strategically placed posters can help to explain the system.

Using the Collection

Your work in the centre is now only beginning. Although you've already spent many hours selecting, ordering, and processing the materials for your centre, the on-going work involved with expanding, updating, maintaining, and helping clients use the collection is about to start.

i) To Lend or Not To Lend

One issue you will have to deal with is your policy on lending materials. That is something that you may wish to take some time deciding about. Users can still access the resources, without removing them from the centre, so you do have some lead time to make your decision.

ii) Dealing with Copyright Issues

But the longer you wait to develop a lending policy, the sooner you will have to deal with yet another major issue relating to using the collection — the issue of copyright as it relates to the copying of materials. If people cannot take resources out of

the centre, their next request will be for copies of various materials. You ll then be faced with attempting to interpret copyright law, and making sure that your practices do not contravene the law.

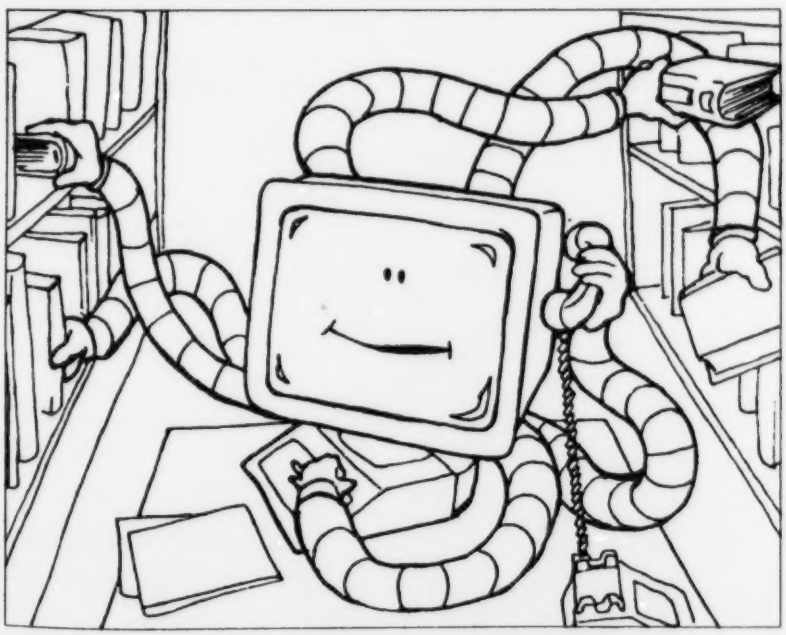
Copyright is a complex area of the law and is currently changing. Make sure that you are aware of acceptable practices with regard to copyright. Use your network of contacts with established Resource Centres and library staff to discover the present do's and don'ts with regard to copyright and the crediting of authors and sources.

6. Computers in your Resource Centre

More and more computers are becoming standard equipment in the workplace, primarily to help us manage the massive amounts of information we must deal with these days. Because of their increasing power, flexibility, sophistication and declining cost, microcomputers, in particular, are now being used by many businesses and organizations to make their operations more efficient, more effective, and more responsive. This is especially true for libraries and Resource Centres where there are many activities which naturally lend themselves to computerization.

Considering Computerization

This chapter will introduce you to the potential benefits of microcomputers within a Resource Centre and will help you decide whether or not your centre is a good candidate for microcomputerization at this time. The focus throughout will be on microcomputers because most smaller Resource Centres will likely not be able to afford a more comprehensive and powerful computer system such as a mainframe or mini-computer. In addition to being initially more affordable, the installation and on-going maintenance of microcomputers are usually more manageable.



Learning About Microcomputers

The following discussion about the use of microcomputers in a Resource Centre will assume that you have some knowledge of microcomputer technology — both hardware and software. If you know little or nothing about computers, you'll probably need to develop at least a basic understanding of microcomputers and appropriate software before attempting to make decisions regarding computerization. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to attempt to make informed decisions concerning which centre functions should be computerized and when, without that basic understanding.

You can learn about microcomputers by attending introductory computer courses, reading books and articles, attending workshops and conferences, and talking to users (particularly librarians and other staff in libraries or Resource Centres that are already computerized).

Considering The Benefits of Microcomputerization

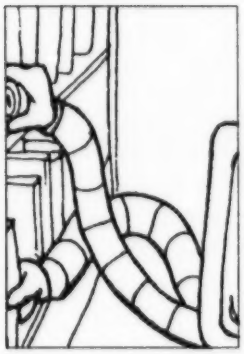
Microcomputers can be used to perform a variety of essential functions in a Resource Centre, including administrative functions, cataloguing, and providing assistance to clients.

Some possible benefits of using microcomputers are:

- increased efficiency,
- faster service to users,
- more time available to assist users (a real plus in small Resource Centres with limited staff),
- increased/quicker access to accurate up-to-date information (for both staff and users), and
- user access to computerized career planning tools (see Chapter 4).

Considering Costs

Needless to say there are costs involved with computerization in terms of both time and money, but these costs are by no means beyond most centre's means. Some of the costs which need to be considered include:



- the cost of computer equipment (hardware)
- the cost of computer programs (software)
- the cost of staff training
- the cost of installation (the set-up — this may or may not be included in the purchase price of your hardware or software)
- the cost of conversion from manual to computer systems, if your centre is currently operating on a manual system
- the time spent in planning, training, installation, conversion (if necessary) and maintenance
- time losses/delays due to incorrect data entry and software problems, particularly when first setting up and learning to operate the microcomputer(s) and software package(s)

Once your system is up and running, you'll find that the benefits will likely outweigh the cost involved.

Computerize...If and When?

The following questions may be able to help you decide whether or not your Resource Centre should purchase a microcomputer now or later.

- Are there numerous repetitive tasks that have to be done in the centre that consume/will consume time that could be better spent in other activities?
- Are there areas in which a large volume of information is/will be processed or required?
- Are there services you should be providing but cannot/will not be able to provide because you do not have a computer? i.e. computer searches, linkage with other library's collections, etc.

If your Centre is already established, you may also want to ask:

- Are there backlogs anywhere that hinder the delivery of service?
- Do you have trouble quickly locating materials that are not on the shelf or overdue?

If your answer to one or more of these questions is "yes," you can probably justify the acquisition of a microcomputer.

Planning for Computerization

The key to successful computerization is planning — firstly, determining which activities/services in your Resource Centre are good candidates for microcomputerization and secondly, deciding if, when and how to computerize these functions.

If done with care, many of the concerns you may have had about selecting the right hardware and software and smoothly incorporating the computer into your system will be taken care of.

Regardless of whether you are just establishing a Resource Centre or your centre is already operating and you are now investigating the possibility of introducing microcomputers, it's a good idea to ease into the process — computerize in stages. Start with one aspect of your centre's activities and add in others once staff/users become comfortable/familiar with the computer(s), and funding/resources become available. Using a step by step approach will make the whole process more manageable.

Planning For Computerization From the Beginning (for new Resource Centres)

If you are in the process of setting up a *new Career Resource Centre*, then you have probably already done a considerable amount of planning. As discussed in Chapter 1, you will have already defined the purpose of the proposed Resource Centre and the scope of its activities/services. You will now need to develop a detailed list of all the activities/tasks that will be involved in operating the centre. This list will be an invaluable tool in planning all aspects of your centre, including microcomputerization.

After making the list, your next step is to analyze each of the tasks/activities on that list to determine which Resource Centre functions are good candidates for computerization (see the list of questions below).

Planning For Conversion (for existing Resource Centres)

If you are considering introducing microcomputers into an *existing Career Resource Centre*, then your first step will be to analyze your current methods of handling major tasks to determine which centre functions are good candidates for computerization. This step also involves identifying which tasks are satisfactorily performed through manual methods, and which could be improved with minor modifications without using a computer.

A good way to begin this analysis is to keep a log of daily activities. The log should include

- a statement about *completion timelines* (i.e. Did this task get completed by the end of the day?) and
- *a statement about "reward value"* (i.e. the degree of satisfaction received in doing the activity) from both a user and staff point of view.

After a few weeks of logging this information, you should be able to estimate the relative amounts of staff time spent on each activity as well as the specific functions which are most rewarding for staff and users. Pay particular attention to those tasks that are time-consuming, routine and have little reward value for either staff or users. Those activities will likely be the best candidates for computerization, if appropriate software exists.

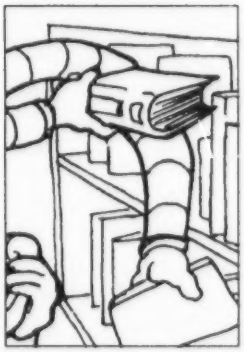
Once you have developed a list of potential activities/tasks for computerization in your proposed or existing Resource Centre, you'll need to ask yourself the following questions about those tasks.

- Is this a task that computers do well (i.e., repetitive, quantitative, routine, voluminous, simple, logical, and straightforward)?
- Is software currently available to perform this task?

- What user benefits does it offer? Will users be responsive/capable of using a computer to perform this function?
- Will it be cheaper in the long run to use a computer to perform this task (time and cost estimates)?
- How well do manual methods work vs. computerized methods (including cost-effectiveness)?

But even after answering those questions, there are still others you will need to ask. You will want to determine:

- How much staff/user resistance there might be to implementing computer-based methods (in a new Resource Centre) or changing from manual methods to computer-based methods (in an existing Resource Centre)?



  One way of determining possible staff/user resistance as well as determining needs of Resource Centre users is to conduct a formal or informal survey of all the potential users of the microcomputer(s), staff as well as current/anticipated centre users.

  If both staff and centre users are going to be allowed to operate the microcomputer(s), you will need to know:
  - who is most interested in using the microcomputer?
  - for what purpose(s) and how often?
  - what is their existing degree of familiarity with computers?
- How much space is required for the equipment and tasks you would like to computerize (i.e. a separate enclosed space may be required for users to do computerized career planning, etc.)? How much space do you have that could be allotted to this/these function(s)? The amount of available space you have may turn out to be an important factor in your decision as to who will use the system, for what purpose(s), and which hardware to select.

Throughout your analysis, it is a good idea to consult with people who already have some experience with computerization of a library/Resource Centre. In fact, try to talk with a number of people about their experiences in setting up and using microcomputer systems in library settings. Besides offering suggestions and alerting you to possible pitfalls/hurdles in the process, they will probably be able to recommend some other resources (i.e. people, publications, associations, etc.). See the References section in this book on page 46 for a listing of publications/articles relating to computerizing libraries and Resource Centres.

Introducing Computers — Choosing Programs to Meet Your Needs

Once you have decided that computers have a definite place in your centre, you'll have to start looking at software and deciding what it is you need.

Looking at Different Kinds of Appropriate Software

This section will introduce you to four types of software that can be used in Resource Centres. It will briefly describe some possible applications of these software packages in terms of various library functions: acquisitions, cataloguing, circulation, serials, reference, administration, and instruction.

1. Word Processing Software

Word processing software saves endless amounts of time, and improves the quality and appearance of typed text. Word processing technology can be used in almost every aspect of library management, from compiling easily updated bibliographies and inventory lists to printing cards, writing year-end reports, and customizing form letters.

Many word processing programs require little training and can usually be learned in a few hours. However, the more functions and flexibility the program offers, the more difficult it is to learn.

Word processing packages are available for almost every kind of microcomputer. With so many good ones available, it is important to have a specific list of features in mind when shopping. Most vendors will give you demonstration copies to use to help you decide which package best meets your specific needs.

2. Database Management Systems Software

A good database management system streamlines the mechanics of information storage and retrieval. Each data file is equivalent to a manual file drawer — containing a set of records, using the same format, and containing the same categories or fields of information.

In terms of information retrieval, the difference is that, from a computerized file, records can be retrieved by any field (or piece) of information on the form (subject, title, etc.) as opposed to only one heading (or piece) used in a manual file cabinet (usually alphabetically by subject). Therefore, one computer record may be equivalent to numerous manual cross-references. An example of this is a program that allows the user to search for a book from a single inventory using any of the following search criteria: author, title, classification code, subject, and keywords.

There are numerous possible applications for database management systems in a Resource Centre, the most obvious being: acquisitions processing, cataloguing, equipment and collection inventory, circulation, serials control, reference, administration, instruction, and the provision of an on-line public access catalogue.

Since a number of database management systems were designed with programmers in mind, more complex programming skills may be, but are not always, needed to operate them. The more complex the program, the longer it takes to learn.

3. Spreadsheet Program Software

Spreadsheet programs basically consist of rows and columns which intersect to form "cells," each of which can be used to store whatever data the user defines. These programs can be used for keeping tallies, as well as using figures for analysis purposes (staff time distribution, service analysis, etc.). Spreadsheet programs can also be used for forecasting and "what-if" planning, since changing one variable automatically changes all related variables. Calculations that take hours or days to do manually can be available in seconds with this software.

While commonly associated with financial planning and budgeting, these programs can also be used for: circulation statistics, collection usage, staff time distribution, and service analysis.

Spreadsheet programs require some time to learn, but usually do not require programming skills. The more commands/functions mastered, however, the more flexible and useful this kind of software becomes to your operations.

4. Special Purpose Packages for Libraries

In the past, a lack of commercially available software for libraries encouraged/forced some of them to custom design their own programs, often at great cost and not always with satisfactory results. However, now that there are many commercially available software programs for libraries, it is possible for small-to-medium sized Resource Centres to become involved in automation relatively inexpensively by purchasing ready-made packages.

Since these packages are too numerous to mention here, we refer you to the References section on page 46 where you will find publications which list and detail software packages specifically designed for libraries.

Obtaining Information About Software

Some good general sources for locating information about quality software include:

- computer manufacturers
- libraries and Resource Centres (government libraries, public libraries, library associations, community agencies with Resource Centres, etc.)
- trade associations related to computer usage (*The Directory of Associations in Canada* lists several computer-related associations.)
- trade publications — look for stories of successful computer installation in Resource Centres or libraries
- computer publications (There are a large number of computer periodicals e.g., *Computerworld*, *Datamation*, *Infoworld*, as well as other computer publications available — check with your local public library.)
- conferences — look for display/exhibit areas at these events, as well as panel discussions on the uses of computers in various settings
- directories published by hardware and software vendors, trade associations, and research groups

Evaluating Software

There are several major areas in which evaluation of computer programs should be done before particular software is purchased. Those areas include the operation of the particular program, the accompanying documentation, the warranty coverage, and the cost.

Experienced software users suggest that the best way to select high quality software is to first prepare a shopping list of the features that you are looking for. If, however, you are relatively unfamiliar with software and the various features that make some programs easy to use and others not, making that list will likely not be a simple job.

Use your network of resource people in various information centres. If possible, see various systems in operation, or get demonstrations where you can talk to users. It's essential for you to get evaluations of the software from current users prior to talking to sales representatives about it. Remember, they are sales people not information specialists.

1. Program Operation

Software should be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

- Does it meet the general requirements of all good software? (user-friendly, menu driven, flexible, etc. — see *Characteristics of Good Software*)
- Does it meet the specific requirements of your Resource Centre setting?
- Is it compatible with existing computer hardware and operating systems in your centre/organization?

Evaluating software from the inside out means that you should not only look at how the program operates or functions, but you must also evaluate the written support documents that come with the program, the availability of on-line assistance, and the program's warranty, as well as all the costs involved in the installation of the system in your centre. The following can serve as a guideline in this process.

2. Documentation (Reference, user, printer and technical manuals)

The manuals that comes with the software should be easy to understand. They should include:

- An overview that clearly explains all available options
- An instruction section that takes you step-by-step through the program with sample screens, files, reports, etc.
- A technical section that includes enough information in it to allow you to modify the program to suit your needs
- An index that is thorough and all-inclusive
- A troubleshooting guide that includes error codes and help documentation

3. Warranty Coverage

The warranty that comes with the software should include/cover the following:

- Money-back guarantee or at least a minimum or limited warranty
- Replacement of defective storage media
- Fixing bugs during warranty period
- Guarantee to run on your hardware
- Toll-free hot-line for answering questions (for a limited period of time at least)

4. Cost

It is important to be able to determine the total purchase price of the software. Be sure you know which of the following costs are covered in the purchase price and what the additional cost would be for those items not covered?

- Basic software package
- On-line processing — if connected to a mini or mainframe system
- Modules that can be added on for extra functions
- Modifications to either update the package or tailor it to better suit your needs
- Maintenance of the system on a continual basis
- Training and on-going technical support

Characteristics of Good Software

In addition to the fact that all software should be "friendly," it should also have the following features:

- Menu-driven — Does it display all the options in a self-explanatory way?
- Easy to understand prompts — Does it tell you in plain language what to do next?
- Error-traps — Does the computer reject obviously wrong data?
- Flexibility — Do you have a lot of options or is there only one way of doing things?
- Automatic defaults — Do you have to specify every available option each time you run the system?
- Rapid sorting — Does a single entry automatically update all affected subsystems?
- On-line inquiry — Can you display any file or record contained in the database and get a hard copy if needed?
- Report generator — Can you create new reports without using programmers to make the changes?
- Audit trail — Are transactions easy to trace for human errors?
- Modifiable — Can you (or will the vendor) modify the package as needed?

Future Trends

The rapid reduction in hardware costs, a major increase in powerfulness and the development of fourth generation languages which make programs easier to write are serving to make microcomputers a standard equipment purchase for both new and existing small-to-medium sized Resource Centres.

A logical next step in the use of microcomputers in these settings is for the various single functions and systems to become integrated so they can perform in much the same way that mini and mainframe computers now operate. Such integration can take place by producing many compatible software packages for one micro system or by connecting various micro systems so they "talk" to each other. This would mean that, in addition to the library functions already discussed in this guide, micros could be used to improve all kinds of user services such as inter-library loan, electronic messaging, and information and referral services.

7. Promoting your Career Resource Centre

This chapter will look at various ways you can promote/publicize the Resource Centre both before it opens and once it is operating. Do keep in mind, however, that promoting the centre is only one part of an overall marketing strategy.

Another very important element of a good marketing strategy is a user needs survey, which you probably have already conducted as part of the planning process for your centre — see Chapter 1. Some method of follow-up to determine the degree of user satisfaction and identify any gaps in service once the centre has been in operation for a period of time is another vital aspect of marketing strategy. The needs survey and follow-up will not only help you zero in on the users and their needs and how you can promote relevant services, but will also allow you to evaluate those services and how they have been promoted. Your promotions can be better targeted and modified as a result of these strategies.

This guide will not give you in-depth information on designing a comprehensive marketing strategy. For further information on this topic, consult other centres, the publications listed under References on page 47, and the many excellent resources available at your local library.

Letting the User Know You Exist

The most comprehensive and up-to-date career resource collection is of little value if its potential users do not know it exists and/or do not use it. Avoiding this involves attracting potential users to the centre, making sure they can easily locate the specific resource materials which meet their needs, and making them feel welcome. As indicated in Chapter 2, having an approachable, accommodating staff is one of the best ways of promoting a Resource Centre.

Depending on the particular focus of your centre, you may want to attract in-house users only, users from the wider community, or both. In-house users will be people who belong to your organization or business. Community users are outside users and could include clients of your organization, volunteer organizations, professional groups, or even book discussion groups interested in having a space to meet on a regular basis.

Attracting Potential Users

A variety of methods can be used to bring potential users into the Resource Centre. Some possible strategies include:

- Issuing local media releases to announce your opening.
- Holding an Open House (announced in a media release). An informal atmosphere with simple refreshments and take-away information brochures can heighten community and in-house interest and use.
- Designing a logo and using it on all materials. This helps establish a recognizable centre identity as well as pride of ownership amongst in-house staff.
- Developing flyers, handouts, or promotional materials such as bookmarks or book covers with the name/logo of the centre stamped on them for distribution within your organization and within the community through such agencies as schools, libraries, etc.
- Placing posters/notices throughout the organization, and in the community (i.e. in schools, shopping malls, etc.) publicizing the centre and its services.
- Developing an audio-visual presentation showing the centre in action with clients using the resource materials. A brief history of the centre's development could add an instructional element but a description of its materials and activities is essential.
- Producing a newsletter that describes the resources, programs, activities, and services available. Include a map that helps users find the various resources.
- Maintaining a visitors' book to provide information for evaluation and a means of recognizing visitors.
- Involving users in the operation of the centre — e.g. in-house users may be willing to assist in setting up displays and bulletin boards, and filing materials.

- Placing a suggestion box in a prominent location to encourage both user and staff comments/input regarding the centre. Always recognize the contributor (if known) when a suggestion is adopted.

i) Community Groups

Additional strategies to attract community groups include:

- Making the centre available to community organizations. One possibility is to allocate some display shelf space to these organizations/agencies. Such steps promote goodwill and positive "word-of-mouth" advertising, the best promotional strategy available!
- Volunteering to conduct community presentations — in classrooms, libraries, girl guides/boy scout meetings, conferences, etc.
- Inviting speakers from the community into the centre to talk about current topics of local interest.
- Being available to meet with civic and community groups.

ii) In-House Users

Additional strategies to attract in-house users include:

- Conducting orientation programs on a regular basis and inviting every potential work unit to learn how the purpose, programs, and materials of the centre can meet their unique needs.
- Making use of existing in-house newsletters or staff memos — short, concise statements are usually appreciated.
- Providing free materials to staff whenever possible.

Encouraging User Self-Directedness

Regardless of how thorough you are in orientating users to the centre and the collection, many of them will need some help at some point in their information search. The goal of any Resource Centre should be to assist the user to be as independent or self-directed in this search as possible. To do this, a number of user aids (in addition to the reference librarian and card catalogue) can be developed.

i) Instructional Signs

The most common aid is the simple instructional sign that tells users where certain information is located or how to use a specific type of filing system. When designing such signs it is important to:

- use eye catching colors and large simple printing
- make the signs large enough to be seen from a distance
- use as few words as possible — be brief and to the point
- guide the user through the process from beginning to end.

It's always a good idea to test your wording on a typical user before finalizing the signs, especially if they are to be printed commercially. It's not easy to master the art of clear, concise instructions.

If many of your Resource Centre clientele are going to be first-time library users or people unfamiliar with typical library classification systems, you may want to consider using subject headings on the library shelving in addition to your classification designations, for the collection of bound non-occupational materials. As well, subject files should have clearly visible headings on the boxes or filing drawers in which they are contained.

Occupational information to be used by clients and the public needs to be easily identifiable by occupational field or industry (whichever you have selected) and can be effectively displayed in three-ring binders on a row of shelves. Occupational information to be used solely by career practitioners (i.e. extensive CCDO/NOC files) is probably best housed in filing cabinets.

ii) Pathfinders

Another helpful user aid are pathfinders, or printed guides that define a pathway through the centre's resources on a particular topic. For example, a pathfinder for resume writing identifies various portions of the library that have information relevant to the writing of resumes. The pathfinder may also include a selected bibliography of particularly useful resources. An additional section could describe other resources available outside the Resource Centre and, in this way, serve a referral function.

This aid should be brief and to the point — ideally no longer than one page, both sides. While one side could describe the centre's resources, the other could provide necessary referral information for major local employment and training resources. It could also be color-coded to fit into a color-coded classification system. See "Careers — Guide to Career Resource Library" in the Appendix for a modified sample of an orientation pathfinder developed by the University of Toronto Career Counselling and Placement Centre.

iii) Bulletin Board Displays, Collages and Posters

Other visual aids which assist users, make your Resource Centre appear friendly and help it to operate smoothly are bulletin board displays, collages and posters.

Displays, collages and posters can be designed to be informational, motivational, or both. When designing displays, collages and posters be as clearly purposeful as possible — a smorgasbord approach is less likely to have impact on the viewer than a thematic approach that deals with a specific topic area.

Examples of possible display, collage and poster themes are:

- "Career-a-Week" — featuring a different occupational field or specific job every week that includes information on key job responsibilities and tasks, entry-level qualifications, career paths, salary, working conditions, as well as contacts for further information (e.g. post-secondary institutions offering training for this occupation, agencies that employ this kind of worker and, with their permission, names of local people who work in this occupation).
- Job Market Trends — featuring current statistical tables and expert opinions on occupations that will/will not be growing in the next five/ten years.
- Career Planning Process — featuring the steps involved in the career planning process with pictures that show people involved in this process at every step.
- The Job Interview — featuring a description of the stages of a typical interview with typical questions asked and reasons behind the questions at each stage.
- Community Career Planning/Education Projects — featuring a different group's project every week/month.

Ideas for displays, collages and posters should relate as closely as possible to the needs of your user groups. In fact, soliciting their help in both planing and constructing the display is an important community relations strategy that will increase commitment and subsequent use of the Resource Centre.

This guide has attempted to draw your attention to all the essential activities involved in setting up a Career Resources Centre. We have also attempted to provide a rationale for many of the activities to help you understand the logic in each consideration suggested.

Since there were many issues we have not treated in great depth, we have provided the names of some excellent supplementary reading sources in the References list that follows. Any questions that have been left unanswered in this guide, can likely be answered from these other resources or by tapping the knowledge and experience of your Resource Centre colleagues in the network you have established through the process of setting up your Career Resource Centre.

References

There are a number of current materials (booklets, articles, etc) available to those planning and setting up libraries/Resource Centres. The following list is just a starting point. We would strongly recommend that you visit your local Library to obtain further information on this topic.

Bedal, Carl L. and Huffman, James L. *The Guidance Information Service: A Counsellor's Guide to the Evaluation, Selection and Use of Career Information in Guidance*. Guidance Centre, Faculty of Education, University of Toronto, Toronto, 1983.

Boss, Richard W. *Information Technologies and Space Planning for Libraries and Information Centers*. G. K. Hall, Boston, 1987.

Concordia Guidance Services. *Blueprint for a Guidance Information Centre: Classification System, Classification System Index, Subject Heading Index*. 3rd rev. ed. Concordia University, Montreal, 1982.

Costa, B. and Costa, M. *A Micro Handbook for Small Libraries and Media Centers*. Second Edition. Libraries Unlimited Inc., Littleton, Colorado, 1986.

Dewey, Patrick R. *101 Software Packages to Use in Your Library: Descriptions, Evaluations, and Practical Advice*. American Library Association, 1987.

Dyer, Hillary and Gunson, Allison *A Directory of Library Information Retrieval Software for Microcomputers*. 3rd Edition. Gower Publishing Company Ltd., Hants, England, 1988.

Fraley, Ruth A. and Anderson, Carol Lee. *Library Space Planning: How to Assess...* Neal-Schuman, New York, 1985.

Hubbard, Marlis and Hawke, Susan. *Developing a Career Information Centre*. Second Revised Edition. Career Information Resource Advisory Group, Montreal, 1987.

Meriless, Bobbie. "Integrated Library Systems in Canadian Public, Academic and Special Libraries: Fourth Annual Survey." *Canadian Library Journal*, June 1990, pp. 193 – 200.

The Library Microcomputer Environment: Management Issues. Edited by Sheila S. Intner and Jane Anne Hannigin. Onyx Press, Phoenix, 1989.

Thompson Brown, Sandra and Brown, Duane. *Designing and Implementing A Career Information Center*. Garrett Park Press, Garrett Park, MD., 1990.

Appendix

Guidelines for a Funding Proposal

I. Title page

A. Title
B. Submitted to
C. Submitted by
D. Funding Period
E. Funds Requested

II. Proposal Abstract (briefly describe the purpose and primary client groups served by your facility)

III. Introduction

A. Background of Organization
B. Statement of Problem (as defined in needs survey)
C. Program Objectives (or what services your facility intends to provide its users)

IV. Plan of action

A. Overview
B. Description of Procedures (that will be used to provide services)
C. Time Schedule

V. Staff

VI. Facilities

VII. Evaluation (how you will determine if your program objectives are being met)

VIII. Budget

A. Direct Costs
B. Indirect Costs

Source: *How to Develop a Career Resource Centre*. Occupational Training Council, British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1981.

Careers

Adapted from the University of Toronto Career Counselling and Placement Centre

Guide to career resource library

This library is designed on the self-help system with a staff member available should assistance be needed. Each resource is catalogued by subject area and colour-coded to reflect its use.

There are four major colour-coded sections to the library which are as follows:

Careers (Red). This section contains descriptive information on a wide range of occupational areas.

Employment (Green). This section contains resources useful primarily for active job searching: business directories; employers of graduates by discipline including detailed information on those companies which recruit on campus; labour market and salary surveys; federal, provincial and municipal government and crown corporation information.

Education (Yellow). This section contains educational directories and calendars for community colleges, university undergraduate, graduate and professional programmes in Canada and the United States, as well as information on part-time, correspondence programmes, short courses and professional development seminars.

Work/Study/Travel Abroad (Blue). This section includes resources on all aspects of living abroad. The educational component contains directories and calendars of full-time graduate and undergraduate programmes as well as short-term courses and exchange programmes. The work and travel areas focus primarily on working holidays, exchange programmes, volunteer work or work camp situations. Information is also available on non-profit organizations such as CUSO, WUSC and UNESCO, as well as profit-oriented organizations with work/study programmes.

Special sections

These resources developed by the Career Counselling and Placement Centre to provide additional assistance with your career development process, can be accessed by the card catalogue, but are shelved separately from the main collection. Special instructions regarding location will appear on the catalogue card.

Careertalk tapes. A collection of audio tapes from our annual Careertalks Series with representatives from education, business and industry.

Sample job binders. Positions advertised in newspapers, journals, government publications and listings from our permanent job registry are housed in a series of binders and indexed according to the academic discipline sought or most applicable and the work environment represented.

Employment surveys. Statistical and occupational information on University of Toronto graduates by academic discipline.

Summer resources. A collection of resources to aid with an active summer job search. Included are listings of employers of students in previous summers and the academic disciplines sought.

Journals and periodicals. Subscriptions to daily newspapers, business journals and periodicals are available to keep you in touch with your field, as well as provide insights into the economic climate and job market.

Career planning and job search resources. Resources that aid in both a theoretical and practical way with the career development and job search process.

Volunteer board. If you wish to augment your work experience, or as an alternative to remunerative work, volunteer jobs are collected from a variety of sources and posted on a bulletin board in the library.